

## NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

Serving America's Heroes



## **Women Veterans Informer**

Volume 2, Issue 4 - Women Veterans Informer

In 2011, the Veteran of the Month award was established for men and women across Nevada who have gone above and beyond the call of duty specifically with respect to volunteer work in support of veterans and the military.

It is an opportunity for all of us to shine a bright light on the work veterans continue to do for our nation.



## April's Veteran of the Month is Sergeant Major (Retired) Michelle Sykes

Michelle Sykes served 29 years in the Army and achieved various awards, the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (7th Award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and much more.

Michelle has dedicated many hours of volunteer service in support of veterans. Some of her service includes: assisting disabled veterans, arranging transportation for the Valley HS JROTC program to the Veterans Day Parade every year, serving as mentor for service members joining the military, raising money for Cancer research and conducting over 100 Color Guards in the last five years at school events,

the Las Vegas City Prayer Breakfast, Football Games, and numerous city events.



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right to left: Sergeant Major (Retired) Michelle Sykes, daughter Dacia Sykes and State of Nevada Governor, Brian Sandoval



# Fisher House Groundbreaking Ceremony in North Las Vegas: New Home for Wounded Warriors' Families

## By KEITH ROGERS LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A dozen dignitaries including three members of Nevada's congressional delegation pitched the first shovelfuls of dirt Friday to launch construction of the state's first Fisher House, where families of wounded warriors can stay while their loved ones recover at the North Las Vegas VA Medical Center.

The \$6 million, two-story building will accommodate up to 16 families. It is being built by the Fisher House Foundation, which is matching \$3 million in funds raised at a breakneck pace by the nonprofit Nevada Military Support Alliance.

Using the words of a mother of an injured soldier who once stayed at a Fisher House, foundation Chief of Staff Mary Considine said this one, like the other 64, will be "a peaceful refuge in the middle of a storm."

"These homes are more than just a free place to sleep," Considine said. "They actually provide a healing environment for the families, a place where they can find solace if they need it, a place where they can find shoulders to cry on."

Scott Bensing, president of the Nevada Military Support Alliance, said, "It's a humbling day. ... I'm so very proud that this day has come nearly 15 months after we committed as a community to raise the \$3 million in local funds to help build this home. Do the math. That's about \$50,000 a week for this entire campaign.

"With the very consistent help of the Nevada Veterans Foundation," he said. "I think it's fair to say that the Nevada Military Support Alliance has set the bar high for Fisher House funding."

After more than a decade of fundraising, first as the Nevada Patriot Fund to help families of Post-9/11 war dead and then in 2009 as the Nevada Military Support Alliance, the Southern Nevada community met the challenge by following the lead of such donors as MGM Resorts International, NV Energy and the Engelstad Family Foundation.

Marine veteran and Las Vegas lawyer Joe Brown, who ran the Nevada Patriot Fund effort, said, "It is a wonderful celebration for me because I've been very involved in this since day one."

Looking back on the Nevada Patriot Fund, "the idea was to take care of Nevadans who were killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. But as the days went by, we not only had Nevadans killed there, but we had Nevadans coming home with no arms and no legs and serious injuries, and our charter under the Nevada Patriot Fund was not broad enough to take care of them. So we really outdid ourselves, renamed ourselves the Nevada Military Support Alliance so we are able to do more things now."

Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev., who serves on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, noted that families who stayed at Fisher House homes last year saved millions of dollars on expenses. "Think of that figure. Think of the fact this is all for free," Titus said. "We leave no soldier behind in the field, and when they come home we leave no family behind. This Fisher House is a statement to that."

Reps Joe Heck, R-Nev., and Cresent Hardy, R-Nev., also attended the groundbreaking.

The MGM Resorts International pledged \$250,000 to the Nevada Military Support Alliance to help build the state's first Fisher House for military families which will feature 16 suites with private bedrooms and baths. Additionally, the house will include a common kitchen, laundry facilities, dining room and a living room with library and toys for children. Working toward a 2015 opening, the alliance is seeking an additional \$1 million to complete the Nevada Fisher House.



## Face of Defense: Female Airman Seeks to 'Make a Difference'

Article by By Senior Airman 1st Class Megan E. Acs DoD News, Defense Media Activity



ALTUS AIR FORCE BASE, Okla., April 1, 2015 - Air Force Senior Airman Julie Breault said the desire to serve in the military was instilled in her at a young age. "I wanted to be security forces. I know a lot of people go into the Air Force and get weeded into security forces, but I chose it because I feel like as security forces I can truly make a difference," said Breault, who is a 4th-generation service member. While the security forces career field has traditionally been male-oriented, Breault said she remains undeterred and unaffected by gender-role stereotypes.

#### **Gender 'Doesn't Matter'**

"Being in a career field that is primarily male-dominated feels relatively normal to me," Breault said. "I understand women are outnumbered in security forces, but the guys do a really good job of treating me equally. When stuff hits the fan, it doesn't matter [the] the gender of the person to the left or right of you. We're defenders. That's the label I'd prefer." Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kevin Smith, Breault's supervisor at the 97th Security Forces Squadron here, noted that her performance is exemplary and said she performs her duties just as well, if not better, than many of the males in the same career field.

#### 'One of the Best'

"I wish more airmen would try to emulate her. She does things the best way she can and learns how to do things properly so she doesn't have to do them again," Smith said of Breault's duty performance. "She's a very hard worker. She's one of the best that I've had work for me." Breault said she's often asked about why she chose to join the military.

"Nobody has blatantly come up to me and said I shouldn't be in the military because I'm a woman, but I have had people question why I wouldn't want to do something else instead, like teach, or stay home with the kids," she said. "I don't have children currently, but I've seen many strong women who make it to the ranks of chief master sergeant or general. Many of them are mothers and wives and they do just fine. Someday I want to be a strong role model for my children as a woman in the military."

In addition to these inquiries, Breault also expressed frustration at a belief held by some that women are recognized either through promotion or awards simply for being female. "I've seen when women are recognized for doing a good job, there are often whispers and murmurs that she was only recognized because she was a woman and not for her hard work. I would like to break that stereotype," she said. "Women should be able to get excited about their accomplishments without having to hear, 'You got it because you're a girl.'"

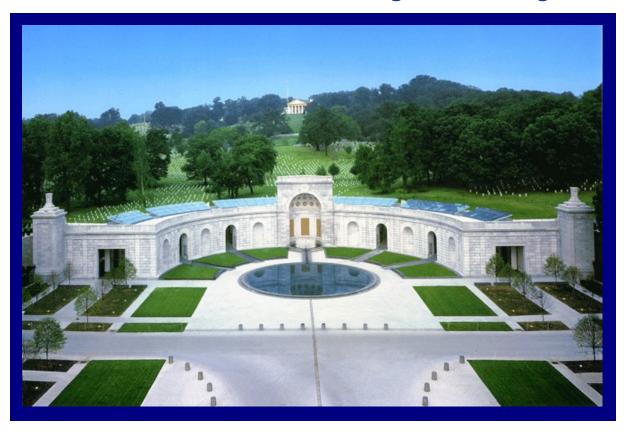
#### 'We're Strong'

Breault expressed excitement and admiration for the women now being accepted into some combat positions, and said she was happy to see women progress in the traditionally male career fields. "I want people to know that we're strong," she said. "We're just as strong mentally and physically as the guys. Women are being accepted into Army Ranger School and they're going to be held to the same standards as the men."

Breault described her experiences and expectations as promising and sees a bright future for herself in the Air Force. She joked that she plans on staying in the Air Force until she has to be wheeled out as an old lady. "I could see her being a chief someday," Smith said. "She has that type of drive and motivation. You don't have to give her a task if she knows something needs to be done. She'll just go ahead, take the lead, and knock it out. She's top-notch."

Breault said she does aspire to reach the top of the enlisted ranks. "I have a huge plan. I not only want to make chief, but if no one beats me to it in the near future, I would like to be the first female Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force," she said. "I know I have what it takes."

## Women's Memorial Foundation Seeking Veterans to Register



The Women in Military Service for America Memorial (shown here) here allows women to record their role in the nation's heritage. Dedicated in 1997, the memorial is the only national memorial honoring women who have served in our nation's defense in all eras and in all services.

It is located next to Arlington National Cemetery. According to the memorial's website, 2.5 million women have served in defense of the nation since the beginning more than 230 years ago; however, only 250,000 of these women are registered with the memorial.

Registration is not automatic. Service women, past or present, must register themselves. People can also register women they know of who served. Memorial officials ask women to share their stories and encourage other service women to do the same.

Registration is free; however, people may make a donation. Visit www.womensmemorial.org and click on "Membership" to register. To register by mail, contact the memorial staff at 703-533-1155 or 800-222-2294 to request a registration form, or write: Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation, Dept. 560, Washington, DC, 20042-560.

Groundbreaking for the memorial took place June 22, 1995. Total cost of building the memorial was \$22 million. In building the memorial, support came from federal grants; proceeds from the sales of commemorative silver dollars; and corporate, organization and individual donations.

## Northern & Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery



## Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery

The Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery is located in the quiet, peaceful community of Fernley, Nevada, which is 40 minutes from downtown Reno.

The cemetery is located on 40 acres owned and maintained by the State of Nevada.

Since it's opening, over 5,000 veterans and family members of veterans have been placed to rest at the cemetery.

## Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery

The Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery is located in Boulder City, Nevada less than 30 minutes from the Las Vegas Boulevard. The SNVMC is also under the administration of the Nevada Department of Veterans Services and funded by the State of Nevada and the National Cemetery Association.

For burial location information for this location please use this link. http://tinyurl.com/pkxolb9





Every Memorial and Veterans Day, in honor of all United States of America Veterans, the SNVMC and the NNVMC hold memorial ceremonies.

The public is welcome to attend these events and participate in placing wreaths and flags on each marker.

Donations can be made to Wreaths Across America. (See last page for details).

For details on Memorial and Veterans Day events, or how to apply for burial benefits please contact the Nevada Department of Veteran Services at 702.791.9000 ext. 15518

## New Members Appointed to VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans

#### WASHINGTON -

Four new members have been appointed to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, an expert panel that advises the Secretary on issues and programs affecting women Veterans. Established in 1983, the Committee makes recommendations to the



Secretary for administrative and legislative changes.

Of the approximately 22 million living Veterans, about 2 million are women Veterans. Women comprise 9.2 percent of the total Veteran population. VA estimates that by 2040, women Veterans will comprise approximately 16 percent of the total Veteran population.

#### New members of the Committee:

- Ms. Octavia Harris, El Cajon, California, a retired Command Master Chief, U.S. Navy; currently serves as a program manager of the Comprehensive Advanced Restorative Effort at the San Diego Naval Medical Center;
- Ms. Louisa Long Jaffe, Alexandria, Virginia, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army; currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of Technical and Project Engineering, LLC;
- Dr. Joyce Johnson, Chevy Chase, Maryland, a retired Rear Admiral, U.S. Public Health Service; currently practices medicine in the specialty of public health/preventive medicine, and serves as a global health/public health and management consultant; and,
- Ms. Shannon McLaughlin, Sharon, Massachusetts, a Major serving full time in the Massachusetts National Guard, with combat service in Afghanistan.

The new Committee members, who are appointed to two-year terms, join Committee members Dr. Shirley Quarles of Atlanta, Georgia; Ms. Felipe Torres, Helotes, Texas; and Ms. Mary Westmoreland, Bronxville, New York, who were also reappointed for another term.

For more information about women Veterans, visit www.va.gov/womenvet, or contact the Women Veterans Call Center at 1-855-829-6636. The call center is available to address concerns of women Veterans, their families and caregivers Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., ET, and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., ET.

**In Nevada** — Dr. Anne Davis serves as the Chairperson for the Women Veterans Advisory Council (WVAC). The WVAC meet every month to advocate for women veterans, promote and plan events, discuss women veteran issues, support health and wellness and address topics brought before legislation.

The next WVAC meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2015 at 9 a.m. PST. via teleconference. For additional details, please call 702.791.9000 ext. 15518 or email stevensn@veterans.nv.gov

## **Honoring Women Veterans**

At the Nevada Department of Veterans Services, we're committed to delivering quality services to all Nevada veterans, and these pages will educate you – a woman veteran who proudly defended our freedom – about benefits and resources.

Women have served the cause of freedom in every war and every generation since the Revolution. Those we honor number some 1.8 million, including nearly 24,000 women veterans currently residing in Nevada. Today, more than 25 percent of our military strength worldwide is women, and women serve in almost every capacity in the armed forces, including in combat zones on land, at sea and in the skies. More than 177,000 women from across the country have served as fighter pilots, medics, military police and in other roles since the start of the Global War on Terror.

It's all too common for women veterans to pack away their uniforms and memories upon return to civilian life, never to discuss their experiences again. Many women who honorably served don't even realize they're veterans – or realize their eligibility for benefits. Through these pages, we acknowledge your service and offer several resources to help you understand your status and what it means. By working together, we will achieve success in establishing a network to further communication and women veterans outreach.

Looking for help? See below for important phone numbers.

**Nevada Department of Veterans Services** 

1(866) 630-VETS 1(866) 630-8387

**Department of Veterans Affairs** 1(800) 827-1000

**VA Suicide Prevention Hotline** 1(800) 273-TALK 1(800) 273-8255



## Stay Connected to Women Veterans and Veteran Events

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NevadaWomenVeterans

Twitter: twitter.com/NDVS\_Necole

Google+: tinyurl.com/NDVSgpage

Website: www.veterans.nv.gov/

Email: stevensn@veterans.nv.gov

Green Zone Network: www.greenzonenetwork.org





## **Tricare for Life and Medicare Coverage**

When you turn 65, your current TRICARE medical benefits will end. MEDICARE will become your primary medical coverage and **TRICARE For Life (TFL)** pays secondary to MEDICARE.

You MUST enroll in MEDICARE PART B in order to obtain TRICARE For Life coverage.

As a TRICARE beneficiary, you are eligible for TRICARE For Life benefits on the first date that you have both Medicare Part A and Part B.

If you already have Medicare Part A and wish to sign up for Medicare Part B, please call **1-800-772-1213** (TTY **1-800-325-0778**) or contact your local Social Security office.

You may also enroll in Medicare Part B online at <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/">http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/</a> or <a href="http://www.medicare.gov">http://www.medicare.gov</a>. You cannot sign up online for Medicare Part B only.

Additional TRICARE For Life related information, contact numbers, handbooks, etc., can be found on the TRICARE web site at <a href="http://www.tricare.mil/tfl">http://www.tricare.mil/tfl</a> or by calling TFL Customer Service at **1-866-773-0404 (TDD 1-866-773-0405)**. You may also call the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) at **1-800-538-9552** for more info about TFL.

If your DEERS data are up-to-date and you obtain Medicare Part B, your TFL coverage is automatic.

NOTE: If you are eligible for TRICARE For Life, please consider joining the TRICARE For Life (TFL) mailing list at www.hostmtb.org or http://www.hostmtb.org/tfl.html or contact the Mailing List Manager to be added to the TFL mailing list.



# Attending a job fair is a proactive way of getting to know companies or industries you're interested in. It is also a great way

to make professional contacts.

#### **Upcoming Job Fairs**

#### Virtual Career Fair

May 6, 2015 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Eastern Active Duty, Reserves, Veterans, Military Spouses http://tinyurl.com/pwxor2w

#### **Veteran and Spouse Job Fair**

May 14, 2015 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM Pacific Las Vegas Motor Speedway 7000 Las Vegas Boulevard North Las Vegas, NV 89115 513-683-5020 support@recruitmilitary.com http://tinyurl.com/nf46dwh

#### **VA Police Recruitment Fair**

May 16, 2015 10:00 AM - 1:30 PM Pacific North Las Vegas VA Medical Center 6900 N Pecos Rd North Las Vegas, NV 89086 Room 1C166 (Resume, DD214 and ID required). Oral Boards held on site

#### Virtual Military Job Fair

Co-hosted by Corporate Gray and MOAA May 27, 2015 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM Eastern http://tinyurl.com/op6okrg

#### **Career Corner**



NETWORKING RECEPTION AND HIRING FAIR The Club 5871 Fitzgerald Blvd. Nellis AFB

#### APRIL 28, 2015 | 6:30-8:30 PM

Please join us for a special catered networking reception geared towards military spouses, employers, and service organizations. This event is free of cost.

The event is open to all military spouses, including Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Veteran, and Gold Star Spouses.

#### Military spouses will have an opportunity to:

- Network with local business executives, community leaders, and senior military spouses
- Gain valuable insight on career planning
   Connect with other military spouses in the
- Connect with other military spouses in the area to form new networks and connections

#### APRIL 29, 2015 | 10AM-1PM

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring Our Heroes and Nellis AFRC\* present the Military Spouse Hiring Fair sponsored by LaQuinta Inns & Suites.

The event is open to all military spouses, including Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Veteran, and Gold Star Spouses.

#### Our career and hiring fair features:

- Employers looking for and committed to hiring military spouses, including MSEP partners
- Presentations to help spouses plan a career in a highly mobile environment
- Resume help

## REGISTER ONLINE: HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG











HIRINGOURHEROES.ORG

\* Does not imply Federal endorsement







#### Reno Career Fair

Meet Your Next Employer & participate in an iPad Giveaway hosted by National Career Fairs Thursday, September 17, 2015 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM (PDT)

To register: http://tinyurl.com/mxaeg2e

#### **Sparks**

Nevada JobConnect is on now located at 2281 Pyramid Way, Sparks. The new location is open for business and is closer to the heart of downtown Sparks. Nevada JobConnect provides employment-related services at no cost to jobseekers and employers. Job Seeker services include referrals to jobs, job boards, on-line jobs data base, resume-writing assistance, referrals for job training programs, resource centers with computers, and dedicated employment services for Veterans and people with disabilities. For more information: www.Nevadajobconnect.com.

#### SAVE THE DATE

#### 3rd Annual Summer Salute at Rancho San Rafael Park

Join us Saturday, May 23rd at Rancho San Rafael Park for the 3rd Annual "Summer Salute". The free all-day event is brought to you by News Talk 780 KOH and Classic Chevy of Reno, and will feature great local food trucks, lots of vendors and crafts for shopping, raffle and silent auction items along with one of the largest car shows in Reno. This year's show will feature 26 classes of cars with over 600 vehicles expected. Bring your friends and family and celebrate Memorial Day weekend by supporting and honoring veterans in our

community. KOH News Talk 780 AM will be broadcasting live

from the event.

The entry fee for a vehicle is only \$10. https://www.veteransquesthouse.org/events/

Proceeds will help support the Veterans Guest House in Reno. For registration information call Nancy King at 775-424-3805.



For sponsorship information Call Ed DeMichele at 775-425-1486 or Bill King at 775-424-3806.

## ELKO TO SALT LAKE CITY FATIGUES TO FABULOUS

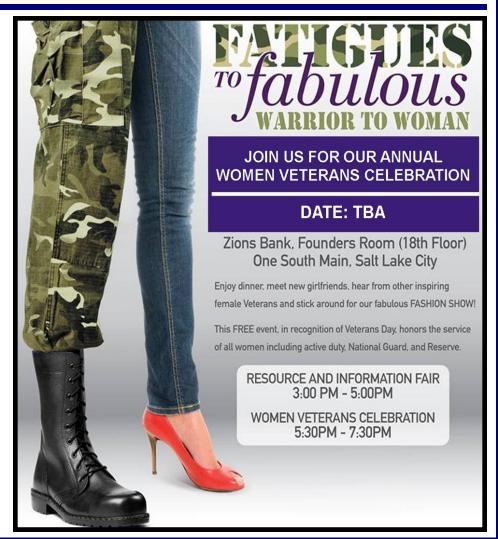
In support of women veterans, the Department of Veteran Services will transport 45 women veterans who reside in the Elko Area to Salt Lake City via charter bus for a Women Veterans Celebration.

If you are a woman veteran living in Elko and would like to join us for the Fatigues to Fabulous event in Salt Lake City, please contact your

## Nevada Department of Veteran Services (NDVS)

Women Veterans Coordinator: Necole Stevens

Either by phone at 702.791.9000 ext: 15518 or by email at stevensn@veterans.nv.gov for additional information.







Necole Stevens Women Veterans Coordinator for Nevada Department of Veterans Services

Southern Nevada
Healthcare System
North Las Vegas VA
Medical Center
6900 N Pecos Rd.
Room I C238
North Las Vegas, NV 89086
Phone: 702.791.9000
Ext: 15518
E-mail:
stevensn@veterans.nv.gov



Green Zone Network
"Get connected with
the Nevada
Veteran Community"
Employment, Education
and Wellness

#### www.greenzonenetwork.org

Nevada Department of Veteran Services General Information (866) 630-8387

Visit <u>www.veterans.nv.gov</u>

for information concerning;
Nevada State
Veterans Home
Southern and Northern
Nevada Veteran
Memorial Cemeteries
Veterans Rural Outreach
"ROVER" Calendar



### **Vision**

Volume 2, Issue I - Women Veterans Informer

Nevadans across the state understand and celebrate the legacy of America's servicewomen and **all** Nevada women veterans understand and have access to benefits to which they are eligible.

#### **Mission**

To provide women veteran benefit and activity information; resolve women veteran problems or refer veterans to NDVS service officers and other beneficial service providers for assistance; and to develop programs and activities that ensure Nevada women veterans understand, and are able to obtain, any aid or benefit to which they may be eligible.

#### **Submit Pictures and Articles**

To submit articles and pictures for publication in the Women Veterans
Informer please email the women veterans coordinator at:

stevensn@veterans.nv.gov

#### Nominate a Woman Vet for Veteran of the Month

To read the Veteran of the Month Guidelines and access submission forms please go to: http://www.veterans.nv.gov/page/veteran-of-the-month-program

"Men and women across Nevada who have made a significant contribution will have achieved excellence by going above and beyond the call of duty specifically with respect to volunteer work in support of veterans and the military, we're going to recognize their service,"

-Governor Sandoval

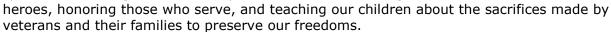
"It will be an opportunity for all of us to shine a bright light on the work veterans continue to do for our nation." The program is managed by the NDVS and we continue to ask for your help in nominating possible candidates so we may recognize veterans who contribute time and effort for the betterment of our state and the veteran community.

Submissions will be reviewed and chosen by the members of the Veterans Service Commission (VSC) at their quarterly meetings.

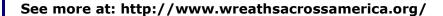
#### **Wreaths Across America**

Our mission, Remember, Honor, Teach, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies a specified Saturday in December at Arlington, as well as veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

We also organize a week of events including international veteran's tributes, ceremonies at State Houses and a week-long "Veteran's Parade" between Maine and Virginia where we stop along the way to spread our message about the importance of remembering our fallen



The cost of our programs is paid by individual wreaths sponsors, corporate and volunteer donors.



Our ultimate goal is to cover every grave site at the SNVMC and honor all the veterans interred within the cemetery. That number is now over 5,500. The public is welcome to attend and assist with placing the wreaths following the ceremony.

#### **Wreaths Across America Donation**



☐ Credit Card	☐ Business/Personal Check	☐ Money Order/Cashier's Check
Name	Siç	gnature
Address	Cre	edit Card #
Phone	Ex	piration Date